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## TO THE PEOPLE OF THE FIFTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF THE STATE OF INDIANA.

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I am in the constant receipt of letters, from various persons in the district, inquiring of my views on the subject of the re-annexation of Texas to this Union ; and as it would be impossible for me to answer all these letters in detail, I have chosen this method of publicly expressing my opinions in relation to this momentous question. As a politician, I always speak out openly and frankly on the various political questions as they arise. I shall do so in this case. But I wish it to be distinctly understood, that the opinions here expressed are my own. If they shall accord in sentiment with a majority of my constituents, it will gratify me. If not, you have only to make known your wishes, and I will govern myself, in any vote I may have to give, accordingly. It is your right to instruct me upon all questions. It is my duty to obey. If left uninstructed in this case, as well as all others, I shall consult the dictates of my own judgment. A treaty, providing for the re-annexation of this beautiful and fertile country to the United States has been signed, and is now before the Senate for their action.

It will be observed that I use the word *re-annexation*. The term is correct, for the reason that Texas was once a part of the United States. The mouth of the Mississippi, and the coast along the Gulf of Mexico as far west as the Rio Grande, (or, as it is sometimes called, the Rio del Norte,) was discovered in 1685 by La Salle, a French navigator. It is a principle of national law, that a nation discovering the mouth of a river is entitled to the country to its entire source. By a treaty made with France in 1803, this country, including Louisiana proper and Texas, was ceded to the United States. This right of cession at that time seemed to be undoubted. France was entitled to the territory, by virtue of discovery; and, by treaty, all her rights to the country thus held were transferred to the United States. Mr. Jefferson declared that Texas was as clearly embraced within the purchase as was New Orleans itself; and this right was afterwards asserted by Presidents Madison and Monroe, and M. Laussat, the French commissioner, (who, under the treaty of cession, delivered the possessions of Louisiana to the United States,) declared the Del Norte as its true boundary. John Quincy Adams, in a letter to Don Onis, of the 12th March, 1818, says: "The claim of France always did extend westward to the Rio del Norte." So that it will be seen that, from the treaty of 1803 to the treaty of 1819, Texas was regarded by both France and Spain as belonging to the United States. By the treaty which was made in 1819, for the purchase of Florida from Spain, Texas was relinquished to Spain; and the Sabine, instead of the Rio Grande, or Del Norte, was fixed as the boundary between the United States and the Spanish province of Mexico. By what miserable diplomacy this country was surrendered, or what motives influenced those engaged in making this treaty, I will not undertake to decide; but I believe it is now well established that the original boundaries might have been retained, if they had been contended for: for the authority now seems to be undoubted, that the Spanish ambassador, in the treaty by which this

beautiful and fertile country was ceded to Spain, had been permitted, by his instructions from his Government, to make the Rio Grande the boundary between the United States and Mexico. And but cast your eye upon the map of North America, and you will at once see that this is the natural boundary between the two countries. It is a part of the great Mississippi valley, and a large portion of it is watered by the Arkansas and Red rivers, and their tributaries. It has no geographical affinity to Mexico. It is separated from that country by high and impassable mountains, and vast desert prairies, inhabited only by the buffalo, the wild Indian, and their neighbor, the roving trapper. The treaty, by which this country was ceded to Spain, was at that time opposed with great violence by many distinguished statesmen of this country. It was contended (and I think rightfully) that, although the constitution gave power to annex territory, yet it gave no power to cede. Mr. Clay, on the 3d of April, 1820, introduced into the House of Representatives the following resolutions :

1. *Resolved*, That the constitution of the United States vests in Congress no power to dispose of the territory belonging to them ; and that no treaty, purporting to alienate any portion thereof, is valid, without the concurrence of Congress.

2. *Resolved*, That the equivalent proposed to be given by Spain to the United States, in the treaty between them on the 3d day of February, 1819, for that part of Louisiana lying west of the Sabine, was inadequate ; and that it would be inexpedient to make a transfer thereof to any foreign power, or to renew the aforesaid treaty.

And in the debate on these resolutions, Mr. Clay contended that this country could not be alienated by treaty merely ; and that, notwithstanding this treaty was made and ratified, it was in violation of the constitution, and void, and that Texas was still our own.

I need scarcely say anything upon the right to re-annex this country, and to receive it into the Union. The constitution is clear. The power has already been exercised in the purchase of Louisiana and Florida. There is no objection in the present case, that would not apply with equal force in the others. If it be unconstitutional to annex Texas, there are several of the States and Territories in the Union in violation of that sacred instrument. Texas is a sovereign and independent nation, and has been so acknowledged and recognised by our Government, and by the principal nations of Europe. She has the undoubted right to annex her territory to ours, and to merge her sovereignty with the United States.

Has she the right to make such a treaty before her independence is acknowledged by Mexico ? is a question which is often propounded. The revolution which resulted in the complete overthrow of the Mexicans at San Jacinto, and the capture of President Santa Anna, was complete ; and although Mexico has not acknowledged her independence, and is not absolutely at peace with her, still there is no open hostility or actual war. It is a kind of paper blockade, carried on by the issue of hostile bulletins. Mexico once belonged to Spain ; she acquired the right to her country by revolution ; and before this revolution was terminated, and her independence acknowledged by Spain, a negotiation was opened, under the direction of Mr. Adams, then President of the United States, by Mr. Clay, his Secretary of State, for the purchase of Texas from the Mexican authorities ; war was still raging between the two countries. The fortress of San Juan d'Ulloa and Tampico (places that command the principal trade of the interior of Mexico) were in the absolute possession of Spain, and were not evacuated until some years afterwards. Mexico cannot and will not object, unless England interferes. Texas is lost to her, and I feel myself fully author-

ized to say, that justice will be done by the United States to Mexico, and that the whole matter will be amicably adjusted between the two Governments, unless, by delay, other Governments have time to interpose their objections. Mexico would prefer the United States for her neighbor, to the weak and imbecile Government of Texas, or any other power into whose hands it might fall. Santa Anna said to General Jackson, that he was convinced "Texas was a broken wing to Mexico, and that it would be a mere incumbrance and hindrance until it was lopped off." So deeply was General Jackson impressed with the importance of the acquisition of this country, on account of its value and fertility, as well as its importance for our national defence and protection in time of war, that, immediately after his coming into the presidency, he directed Mr. Van Buren, his Secretary of State, to open with the Mexican minister immediate negotiations for the purchase of this country; and these negotiations were kept up until they were cut short by the revolution in Texas in 1834. In a recent letter to the Hon. Aaron V. Brown, of Tennessee, General Jackson says:

HERMITAGE, February 12, 1843.

MY DEAR SIR: Yours of the 23d ult. has been received, and with it the *Madisonian*, containing Governor Gilmer's letter on the subject of the annexation of Texas to the United States.

You are not mistaken in supposing that I have formed an opinion on this interesting subject. It occupied much of my attention during my Presidency, and I am sure has lost none of its importance by what has since transpired.

Soon after my election in 1829, it was made known to me by Mr. Erwin, formerly our minister at the court of Madrid, that whilst at that court he had laid the foundation of a treaty with Spain for the cession of the Floridas, and the settlement of the boundary of Louisiana, fixing the western limit of the latter at the Rio Grande, agreeably to the understanding of France; that he had written home to our Government for powers to complete and sign this negotiation; but that, instead of receiving such authority, the negotiation was taken out of his hands, and transferred to Washington, and a new treaty was there concluded, by which the Sabine, and not the Rio Grande, was recognised and established as the boundary of Louisiana.

Finding that these statements were true, and that our Government did really give up that important territory, when it was at its option to retain it, I was filled with astonishment. The right to the territory was obtained from France; Spain stood ready to acknowledge it to the Rio Grande; and yet the authority asked by our minister to insert the true boundary was not only withheld, but, in lieu of it, a limit was adopted which stripped us of the whole of the vast country lying between the two rivers.

On such a subject, I thought, with the ancient Romans, that it was right never to cede any land or boundary of the republic, but always to add to it by honorable treaty, thus extending the area of freedom; and it was in accordance with this feeling that I gave our minister to Mexico instructions to enter upon a negotiation for the retrocession of Texas to the United States.

This negotiation failed, and I shall ever regret it as a misfortune to both Mexico and the United States. Mr. Gilmer's letter presents many of the considerations which, in my judgment, rendered the step necessary to the peace and harmony of the two countries; but the point in it at that time, which most strongly impelled me to the course I pursued, was the injustice done to us by the surrender of the territory, when it was obvious that it could have been retained without increasing the consideration afterwards given for the Floridas. I could not but feel that the surrender of so vast and important a territory was attributable to an erroneous estimate of the tendency of our institutions, in which there was mingled somewhat of jealousy to the rising greatness of the South and West.

But I forbear to dwell on this part of the history of this question. It is past, and cannot now be undone. We can now only look at it as one of annexation, if Texas presents it to us; and if she does, I do not hesitate to say that the welfare and happiness of our Union require that it should be accepted.

If in a military point of view alone, the question be examined, it will be found to be most important to the United States to be in possession of that territory.

Great Britain has already made treaties with Texas; and we know that far-seeing nation never omits a circumstance in her extensive intercourse with the world, which can be turned to account in increasing her military resources. May she not enter into an alliance with Texas? and re-



serving (as she doubtless will) the northwestern boundary question as a cause of war with us whenever she chooses to declare it, let us suppose that, as an ally with Texas, we are to fight her! Preparatory to such a movement, she sends her 20,000 or 30,000 men to Texas; organizes them on the Sabine, where her supplies and arms can be concentrated before we have even notice of her intentions; makes a lodgment on the Mississippi; excites the negroes to insurrection; the lower country falls, and with it New Orleans; and a servile war rages through the whole South and West.

In the meanwhile she is also moving an army along the upper western frontier from Canada, which, in co-operation with the army from Texas, spreads ruin and havoc from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico.

Who can estimate the national loss we may sustain, before such a movement could be repelled with such force as we could organize on short notice?

Remember that Texas borders upon us, on our west, to 42° of north latitude, and is our southern boundary to the Pacific. Remember, also, that if annexed to the United States, our western boundary would be the Rio Grande, which is of itself a fortification, on account of its extensive, barren, and uninhabitable plains. With such a barrier on our west, we are invincible. The whole European world could not, in combination against us, make an impression on our Union. Our population on the Pacific would rapidly increase, and soon be strong enough for the protection of our eastern whalers, and, in the worst event, could always be sustained by timely aids from the intermediate country.

From the Rio Grande, over land, a large army could not march, or be supplied, unless from the gulf by water, which, by vigilance, could always be intercepted; and, to march an army near the gulf, they could be harassed by militia, and detained until an organized force could be raised to meet them.

But I am in danger of running into unnecessary detail, which my debility will not enable me to close. The question is full of interest, also, as it affects our domestic relations, and as it may bear upon those of Mexico to us. I will not undertake to follow it out to its consequences in those respects; though I must say that, in all its aspects, the annexation of Texas to the United States promises to enlarge the circle of free institutions, and is essential to the United States, particularly as lessening the probabilities of future collision with foreign powers, and giving them greater efficiency in spreading the blessings of peace.

I return you my thanks for your kind letter on this subject, and subscribe myself, with great sincerity, your friend and obedient servant,

ANDREW JACKSON.

Hon. A. V. BROWN.

As late as the 11th of March, 1844, he wrote even more strongly, thus:

"The present golden moment to obtain Texas must not be lost, or Texas must from necessity be thrown into the arms of England, and be forever lost to the United States. \* \* \* I say again, let not this opportunity slip to regain Texas, or it may elude our grasp forever, or cost us oceans of blood and millions of money to free us from the evils that may be brought upon us. I hope and trust there will be as many patriots in the Senate as will ratify the treaty, which I have no doubt will be promptly entered into."

The contiguity of Texas to the United States, her broad and fertile valleys and salubrious climate, have invited the western emigrant to her country. The spirit of patriotism, which now burns so brightly upon her altars, was caught from our forefathers, and is peculiar to the Anglo-Saxon race that now inhabit her wide frontier. Her people speak our own language, profess our holy religion, and are united to us in sentiment and feeling, and by the still stronger ties of consanguinity. What we lost by treachery or mismanagement in negotiating with Spain, she has acquired by her skill and bravery on the field of battle. She now comes with all her treasures, and offers them at our feet. Shall we turn her away? If we do, she must look somewhere else for protection, or she must again fall into the hands of Mexico, and our own citizens, whose enterprise has led them to that country, be executed as felons, and the Protestant missionaries of the cross be driven from the land. I have before me a letter from a distinguished and talented citizen of that country, in which he says: "England is straining every nerve to get a hold upon us; and if the United States still refuses to receive this

lost child into her already numerous family, England may soon become the lawful protector of our rights. We must look somewhere for protection. We are too insignificant in point of population to maintain our own independence." The eagle eye of Great Britain has been upon this country for some time. Her vast possessions in India have, upon full experience, proved unsuccessful for the culture of cotton; and could she but once get a foothold in Texas, she would soon colonize it with the English emigrant, and, in a few years, be enabled to raise a sufficiency of cotton to supply her own manufactories, and thus entirely destroy our foreign market for this great southern product. Sir Richard Pakenham, (who, for fifteen years, had been residing as minister at Mexico,) the very moment that this question was agitated, was transferred from Mexico as ambassador to this country, clothed with special powers to negotiate a treaty on the subject of Oregon. This was all mere pretence on the part of the British Government. In the Oregon question there is nothing to treat about; the country is ours; we are bound in honor to maintain it, and no treaty-making power can take it from us. The object was, by intrigue and management, to prevent the re-annexation of Texas to this country; knowing that, if this object was frustrated, England could immediately back Mexico with means, if not with troops, and then she would have the country in her power; and Texas, rather than fall a prey to Mexico, would be compelled to make such a treaty as England might dictate, and thus to complete the destruction of Louisiana, and to annihilate the commerce of the whole west; accomplishing, through her minister, Sir Richard Pakenham, what his uncle, Sir Edward Pakenham, backed by an army of British soldiery, twenty-nine years ago, failed to carry into effect before New Orleans. I do not mean to be understood as intimating that England would attempt to take forcible possession of Texas, or that Texas would consent to annex herself to England as a colony. Neither of these projects would be attempted at first. But she has already offered her friendly mediation on behalf of Texas, and proposes, by her interposition, to secure peace between Mexico and Texas, and the acknowledgment of the independence of the latter by the former Government, upon the condition that Texas will assume the payment of one million pounds sterling, which Mexico owes to British stock-jobbers. Avarice and ambition lie at the bottom of all her humanity. Influenced by these motives, England has crushed the weaker nations of India, broken down the partition wall which has separated China from the world, and grasped the islands of the sea. She has extended her dominions around the circle of this vast globe, until it is said that the sun never ceases to shine upon her possessions.

In the documents accompanying the treaty, Lord Aberdeen denies that it is the intention of the British Government to interfere, except so far as slavery is concerned. This denial is but characteristic of the cunning diplomacy of John Bull, and is contradicted by all the circumstances attending the case, and is much stronger than the denial of an interested minister, and whose object certainly is to lull the American people into security till the nefarious object is accomplished. Mexico is the debtor to England in a sum equal to about eighty millions, and is therefore under the immediate control of that nation; and, as I have before said, there is no danger of war with Mexico unless England interferes; and this, I hold, she has no right to do, either on the question of our acquiring territory, or the domestic institution of slavery. Open hostility will not be resorted to; but her efforts will first be directed to make Texas a



commercial dependency. She would, by treaty stipulations, open her ports to the agricultural products of Texas; and Texas, in return, would receive English goods free of duty. The country would soon be filled up with the English emigrant, and an English feeling would pervade the land. The cotton of Texas would find its way to the English market free of duty, whilst the cotton of the southern planter of the United States would be prohibited by high tariffs. Manufactured goods would be imported free from England, whilst the American fabric would be restricted by high duties. Texas would first become a commercial dependency; then, if not in name, in fact, a British colony. And, in case of a war between our country and England, she could line the Gulf of Mexico with her hostile fleets, obtain supplies for her armies from Texas, build her war-steamers upon the Red river and the Rio Grande; and with these advantages, New Orleans, our great mart for western commerce, must fall an easy prey to her rapacity. The map of the country shows that Texas naturally belongs to us. It is a part of the great Mississippi valley. And I now ask if there is an American citizen who wishes to see the standard of Great Britain erected for a thousand miles along our southwestern frontier, and this beautiful country, instead of being "the land of the free, and the home of the brave," to be inhabited by the down-trodden subjects of British tyranny?

One great objection which has been urged against the re-annexation of Texas, is the slave question. I am no advocate for slavery; I am opposed to its extension. But, as the slave-trade is prohibited, the admission of Texas into the Union would only extend slavery over a larger surface, without materially increasing the number. Slave-labor can be employed more profitably in the culture of cotton and sugar in Texas, than in grain-growing in many of the States. As slavery would increase in Texas, it would decrease in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and Kentucky, until, in the course of a few years, they would become free States. Another great advantage which we of the west would realize, is, that the free black population of the slave States, instead of emigrating to our country, and filling our land with the crime, misery, and pauperism of this worthless population, would gradually find their way through Texas to Mexico, Central America, and the South American provinces, where they would be free indeed, and where no objection would be made to them on account of color or caste, and where the colored population greatly preponderates. Mexico, Central America, and South America proper, contain a population of about twenty-five millions: of these, not more than four millions are whites—the rest are Indians, negroes, mulattoes, mestizoes, and zamboes. The climate of Mexico and of the country further south is suited to the African race; and I sincerely believe that the same Providence who watched over and led the children of Israel in their exodus from Egyptian bondage, in his own time will open up this way for the redemption of the long-lost sons of Africa, and that the dews of mercy will yet be distilled from the dark and stormy bosom of that cloud which has so long hung over this oppressed people.

The same objection was urged, and from the same quarter, to the admission of Missouri into the Union as a slave State, that is now urged to the political annexation of Texas. The northern federalists, who have always opposed the extension of our territory, and who always prefer ignominious peace to honorable war, now threaten to dismember this

Union. They opposed with equal violence the purchase of Louisiana by Mr. Jefferson. And to alarm and frighten the people, we are told, if Texas is annexed, we shall have war with Mexico and England. With Mexico we shall have no war. With England, unless she surrenders her claim upon Oregon, and ceases to interfere in our negotiations, we may have war; and if our cause be just, rather than submit to the arrogant and impudent interference of England, I say let it come; and should it come, it will meet with a response from the bosom of all who, right or wrong, are for their country. There is a British party in the United States, and that party has existed since the days of the Revolution. It existed during the last war; it showed itself in the halls of Congress, by the act of those who refused to vote supplies to our famishing army; it was seen in the blue lights that burned along the shores of New England; and is now exhibiting itself in those who, with anti American spirit, oppose the extension of our territory, and the spread of civil and religious liberty. The proud march of the Anglo-Saxon race is yet designed, through the mysterious ways of Providence, to overspread this mighty continent, carrying with them the principles of liberty and free government; and whenever any country thus situated can be constitutionally acquired, I am for embracing it in the confederacy, and for extending the glorious principles of our constitution to all who may wish to enjoy its blessings.

Texas is a desirable acquisition to the United States, in several respects. It opens up a wide field to the emigrant. The southern planter, or the northern and western stock and grain grower, may find everything to invite him to this new field of enterprise. The coast region, extending from the mouth of the Sabine to the Rio Grande, or Del Norte, is a level country, commencing with an average breadth of thirty miles, and increasing to seventy between the Sabine and the San Jacinto; it expands in the centre on the Colorado to one hundred, and then gradually diminishes towards the Nueces. This region is partly prairie and partly timbered river bottoms, suited to the profitable culture of the sugar-cane, cotton, indigo, corn, rice, and the sweet potato. Above this level region the country rises in beautiful undulations, extending northwestwardly up the rivers Brazos, Colorado, and Guadalupe, from one hundred and fifty to two hundred miles, covered with a beautiful variety of prairie and woodland, enriched with springs and rivulets of pure and sparkling waters. The undulations often swell, at lengthened intervals, into eminences of soft acclivity, from the summits of which the eye may rest upon some of the fairest scenes in nature. This district of country is peculiarly adapted to the growth of Indian corn, cotton, tobacco, oats, potatoes, &c. Wheat is sometimes raised, though it is not regarded as a profitable crop, except in the more high and mountainous regions. The country is intersected with numerous streams suited to internal navigation, until the point of the highlands is reached, and in that region the water-power for propelling machinery of all kinds for which it is required as an agent, is incalculable.

The rivers which flow into the Gulf of Mexico are the Sabine, Trinidad, San Jacinto, Brazos, Colorado, Navidad, Guadalupe, San Antonio, Nueces, and the great river Grande, or Del Norte, which forms the western boundary of the republic, and the Red river and its tributaries, which flow into the Mississippi. In the middle and western regions, when it shall be accessible to settlement, stock of all kinds, particularly horses and cat-



tle, may be kept in the natural pastures the year round. A better grazing country is nowhere to be found on the continent, mild and salubrious in climate, soil rich, and water pure. It presents more attractions to those who may wish to grow stock, and indulge in so pure and healthy an atmosphere, than any other country bordering on the United States. The climate of this beautiful region, which has obtained for Texas the name of the "Italy of America," is blessed with a temperature delightful to the sense, and favorable to health and life. Frost and ice are seldom seen during the winter months; the trees preserve their foliage, and the plains their verdure; instead of winter, with her chilling blasts, universal summer reigns. Two crops are often gathered in the same year. Notwithstanding the mildness of the winter, the heat of the summer, owing to the constant breezes which prevail, is not oppressive; and nine-tenths of the whole country is more healthy than the United States.

But this is only a partial view of the advantages to be derived from the annexation of Texas. It would be densely settled in a few years, if it were to come under the protection of the United States. Then it would open up to the whole northwest and northeastern portions of our country a profitable market for their products, and especially the flour and pork of Indiana. There would be no duties to pay upon our products before we could sell them, nor any duty on their sugar, cotton, indigo, and rice, before we could purchase and land them in our ports. It will add at least three large States to the Union, where flour and pork must be supplied from the northwestern States.

On looking over the map of the Mississippi valley, one cannot but be struck with the identity, the unity of interest, between all the vast region whose waters flow into the Gulf of Mexico. It would seem as though it was designed by nature that all the elements of wealth and national greatness should be embraced in the great circle bounded by the Alleghanies, the northern lakes, the Rocky mountains, and the Rio Grande. By re-annexing Texas to the confederacy, first as a Territory, then by dividing it into States, and admitting them into the Union, under such wise and just regulations as Congress may from time to time prescribe, will be to complete, by treaty and constitutional law, that union which nature seems to have declared shall be inseparable. Common origin, language, law, institutions, and the strong cement which bound us together during the revolutionary war, render it inadmissible that the present people of the United States inhabiting our present limits should ever be any other than a united people, having one origin, one interest, one destiny; and now, to render the union perfect in extent, secure in its limits, and unembarrassed in its physical relations, it seems to me that a wise foresight would induce every American who is without prejudice to say, "Let the annexation be *now* perfected, while time and circumstances favor the measure, leaving it to the wisdom and patriotism of the future to make a judicious use of the acquisition."

I trust now, my fellow-citizens, that you will give to this momentous subject an impartial investigation. It is a great national matter, and rises above the questions which now divide the two political parties. I am, therefore, for the lawful and constitutional annexation of Texas, and for the armed occupation and settlement of Oregon—"peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must."

WM. J. BROWN.

WASHINGTON CITY, April 24, 1844.